



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEW USE DEVELOPED FOR FISH BODY OIL

Research has opened a new market for fish body oil, the Department of the Interior announced today. The market is in the tanning industry which hitherto has largely operated on the premise that fish body oil was not suitable for the tanning process. Data derived from a Fish and Wildlife Service investigation show, however, that fish body oils are very satisfactory for such uses.

Currently two basic types of oil are used in the fatliquoring phase of leather making--neetsfoot oil for soft leather, and fish liver oil (or fish oil containing a high percentage of fish liver oil) for firm leather. A three-year research program, supported by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, proved that fish body oil, which is available in exportable quantities in the United States, can be used to make the same grade of leather now produced with imported fish liver oils. The domestic fish body oils, in addition, are about 20 percent cheaper in price than the imported product.

The research was done by the Department of Applied Science in Tanning Research Foundation, Tanners' Council of America, University of Cincinnati. Funds for the program were available through the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act for the development of the domestic commercial fishing industry. The project consisted of two years of laboratory work and a year and a half in pilot plant tests in a tannery. Some of the pilot test time overlapped the laboratory time.

A publication has been prepared for a technical journal serving the leather industry and will be published in the near future. Further publication of the findings will be made in a technology supplement to the Bureau's Commercial Fisheries Review and will be available through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service early in the summer.

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